

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A contents distribution system for distributing a content including video and/or music data from a contents distribution apparatus to a terminal device via a network,

wherein the contents distribution apparatus comprises:

5 a content storage section operable to store a content and specific data concerning a predetermined special effect to be applied to the content, the content and the specific data being stored as a pair;

10 a content management data setting section operable to set management data, wherein the management data at least contains a flag indicating whether or not to apply the predetermined special effect to the content during reproduction, and conditions of use which need to be satisfied in order to reproduce the content without the predetermined special effect;

15 and

 a transmission section operable to transmit the content, the specific data, and the management data to the terminal device,

wherein the terminal device comprises:

20 a reception section operable to receive the content, the specific data, and the management data from the transmission section; and

 a reproduction control section operable to

reproduce the content with or without the predetermined special
 25 effect in accordance with the specific data and the presence or
 absence of the flag in the management data, and to reset the flag
 when the conditions of use contained in the management data are
 satisfied.

2. The contents distribution system according to
 claim 1,

wherein the specific data is special effects data which
 is generated based on information concerning a type of the
 5 predetermined special effect and a portion of the content to apply
 the predetermined special effect to; and

when the flag indicates that the predetermined special
 effect must be applied, the reproduction control section in the
 terminal device reproduces the content by applying the special
 10 effects data to the content.

3. The contents distribution system according to
 claim 1,

wherein the specific data is attribute data consisting
 of information concerning a type of the predetermined special
 5 effect and a portion of the content to apply the predetermined
 special effect to; and

when the flag indicates that the predetermined special
 effect must be applied, the reproduction control section in the

terminal device utilizes further data to generate special effects
10 data in accordance with the type and the portion specified by the
attribute data, the further data being previously stored in the
reproduction control section for realizing special effects, and
reproduces the content by applying the special effects data to
the content.

4. The contents distribution system according to
claim 1, wherein the contents distribution apparatus further
comprises a content selection section operable to select, as the
specific data, either special effects data which is generated
5 based on information concerning a type of the predetermined
special effect and a portion of the content to apply the
predetermined special effect to, or attribute data consisting of
the information concerning the type and the portion, such that
the special effects data is selected for said terminal device
10 having a relatively low processing ability and the attribute data
is selected for said terminal device having a relatively high
processing ability,

wherein, when the flag indicates that the predetermined
special effect must be applied, the reproduction control section
15 in said terminal device having a relatively low processing ability
reproduces the content by applying the special effects data to
the content; and

when the flag indicates that the predetermined special

effect must be applied, the reproduction control section in said
20 terminal device having a relatively high processing ability
utilizes further data to generate special effects data in
accordance with the type and the portion specified by the
attribute data, the further data being previously stored in the
reproduction control section for realizing special effects, and
25 reproduces the content by applying the special effects data to
the content.

5. The contents distribution system according to
claim 4, wherein the content selection section in the contents
distribution apparatus selects the specific data to be appended
to the content based on processing ability information which is
5 supplied from the terminal device.

6. The contents distribution system according to
claim 1, wherein the contents distribution apparatus further
comprises a data storage section operable to store the management
data.

7. The contents distribution system according to
claim 1, wherein the contents distribution apparatus further
comprises a distribution content reproduction confirmation
section operable to reproduce for confirmation the content with
5 or without the predetermined special effect in accordance with

the flag in the management data set by the content management data setting section.

8. A contents distribution method for distributing a content including video and/or music data from a contents distribution apparatus to a terminal device via a network,

wherein the contents distribution apparatus performs:

5 a step of storing a content and specific data concerning a predetermined special effect to be applied to the content, the content and the specific data being stored as a pair;

a step of setting management data, wherein the management data at least contains a flag indicating whether or
10 not to apply the predetermined special effect to the content during reproduction, and conditions of use which need to be satisfied in order to reproduce the content without the predetermined special effect; and

a step of transmitting the content, the specific data,
15 and the management data to the terminal device,

wherein the terminal device performs:

a step of receiving the content, the specific data, and the management data from the contents distribution apparatus;

a step of reproducing the content with or without
20 the predetermined special effect in accordance with the specific data and the presence or absence of the flag in the management data; and

10050003-014802

a step of resetting the flag when the conditions of use contained in the management data are satisfied.

9. The contents distribution method according to claim 8,

wherein the specific data is special effects data which is generated based on information concerning a type of the predetermined special effect and a portion of the content to apply the predetermined special effect to; and

when the flag indicates that the predetermined special effect must be applied, the step of reproducing the content which is performed by the terminal device reproduces the content by applying the special effects data to the content.

10. The contents distribution method according to claim 8,

wherein the specific data is attribute data consisting of information concerning a type of the predetermined special effect and a portion of the content to apply the predetermined special effect to; and

when the flag indicates that the predetermined special effect must be applied, the step of reproducing the content which is performed by the terminal device utilizes further data to generate special effects data in accordance with the type and the portion specified by the attribute data, the further data being

previously stored in the terminal device for realizing special effects, and reproduces the content by applying the special effects data to the content.

11. The contents distribution method according to claim 8, wherein the contents distribution apparatus further performs a step of selecting, as the specific data, either special effects data which is generated based on information concerning
5 a type of the predetermined special effect and a portion of the content to apply the predetermined special effect to, or attribute data consisting of the information concerning the type and the portion, such that the special effects data is selected for said terminal device having a relatively low processing ability and
10 the attribute data is selected for said terminal device having a relatively high processing ability,

wherein, when the flag indicates that the predetermined special effect must be applied, the step of reproducing the content which is performed by said terminal device having a
15 relatively low processing ability reproduces the content by applying the special effects data to the content; and

when the flag indicates that the predetermined special effect must be applied, the step of reproducing the content which is performed by said terminal device having a relatively high
20 processing ability utilizes further data to generate special effects data in accordance with the type and the portion specified

by the attribute data, the further data being previously stored
in the terminal device for realizing special effects, and
reproduces the content by applying the special effects data to
25 the content.

12. The contents distribution method according to
claim 11, wherein the step of selecting the specific data which
is performed by the contents distribution apparatus selects the
specific data to be appended to the content based on processing
5 ability information which is supplied from the terminal device.

13. The contents distribution method according to
claim 8, wherein the contents distribution apparatus further
performs a step of storing the management data.

14. The contents distribution method according to
claim 8, wherein the contents distribution apparatus further
performs a step of reproducing for confirmation the content with
or without the predetermined special effect in accordance with
5 the flag in the management data set by the step of setting
management data.

15. A contents distribution apparatus for distributing
a content including video and/or music data to a terminal device
via a network, comprising:

a content storage section operable to store a content
 5 and specific data concerning a predetermined special effect to
 be applied to the content, the content and the specific data being
 stored as a pair;

a content management data setting section operable to
 set management data, wherein the management data at least contains
 10 a flag indicating whether or not to apply the predetermined
 special effect to the content during reproduction, and conditions
 of use which need to be satisfied in order to reproduce the content
 without the predetermined special effect; and

a transmission section operable to transmit the content,
 15 the specific data, and the management data to the terminal device.

16. The contents distribution apparatus according to
 claim 15,

wherein the specific data is special effects data which
 is generated based on information concerning a type of the
 5 predetermined special effect and a portion of the content to apply
 the predetermined special effect to.

17. The contents distribution apparatus according to
 claim 15,

wherein the specific data is attribute data consisting
 of information concerning a type of the predetermined special
 5 effect and a portion of the content to apply the predetermined

special effect to.

18. The contents distribution apparatus according to claim 15, further comprising a content selection section operable to select, as the specific data, either special effects data which is generated based on information concerning a type of the predetermined special effect and a portion of the content to apply the predetermined special effect to, or attribute data consisting of the information concerning the type and the portion, such that the special effects data is selected for said terminal device having a relatively low processing ability and the attribute data is selected for said terminal device having a relatively high processing ability.

19. The contents distribution apparatus according to claim 18, wherein the content selection section selects the specific data to be appended to the content based on processing ability information which is supplied from the terminal device.

20. The contents distribution apparatus according to claim 15, further comprising a data storage section operable to store the management data.

21. The contents distribution apparatus according to claim 15, further comprising a distribution content reproduction

confirmation section operable to reproduce for confirmation the
content with or without the predetermined special effect in
5 accordance with the flag in the management data set by the content
management data setting section.

10050098.01802